



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

March 17, 2010

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***Give Kids A Smile Day* Events Provide Relief for Children**

BISMARCK, N.D. – In February, oral health professionals from across North Dakota donated their time, equipment and supplies to provide free dental care to kids during the annual *Give Kids A Smile Day* events, according to Kimberlie Yineman, director of the North Dakota Department of Health's Oral Health Program.

Give Kids A Smile Day is a program of the American Dental Association and is observed every year in February. The goal of the event is to provide education, preventative and restorative care to children from low-income families.

"Many children in North Dakota do not have access to regular dental care; for others, their families can't afford dental services," Yineman said. "The *Give Kids A Smile Day* events were inspiring. It was exciting to see dedicated dental professionals step forward to help these children, many of whom were in pain and were suffering from untreated dental problems."

A total of 155 children were served at five locations, and more than \$60,000 worth of dental services were provided for free. Events were held at Dakota Family Dentistry and Nelson Family Dental, Bismarck; Ideal Image Dentistry, Mandan; Valley Community Health Centers, Grand Forks; and North Dakota State College of Science, Wahpeton.

Preventative services provided included exams, cleanings, x-rays, fluoride treatments, dental sealants and oral hygiene instruction. Some children received restorative care at the event, and some were referred to other dentists who continued their care with free fillings and extractions.

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“This event is really important as it focuses on those children who don’t have insurance to cover their dental needs and don’t currently have a dental home,” said Grant Korsmo, dental director of the Valley Community Health Centers Dental Clinic in Grand Forks. “We get to help improve the lives of these children with immediate care. Many of them have significant dental decay that can cause problems at home with behavior and sleeping, as well as in school. Imagine trying to concentrate when you have a tooth that hurts so bad that it brings you to tears. Often, when these children receive needed dental care, their grades improve. Another great part of these events is that we get to provide some preventative care and give them instructions about proper oral hygiene. These are the things that will help reduce future dental problems for these kids.”

Along with the 36 dentists who participated, many others contributed to the 2010 events – including dental hygienists, dental assistants, administrative staff members, local dental coalitions, local public health units, social service agencies, the North Dakota Dental Association, the North Dakota Department of Health, the North Dakota Dental Foundation, the American Dental Association, dental hygiene and dental assistant students, and many community volunteers.

For more information, the media may call Kimberlie Yineman, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.4930.

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